

**ASIAN AMERICAN YOUTH IN THE TWIN CITIES:  
OVERACHIEVERS OR DELINQUENTS?**

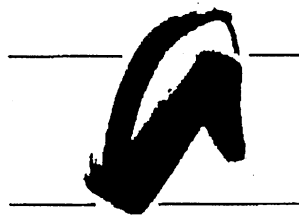
**A Report by May Kao Yang**

**and the**

**Asian American Renaissance**

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**September 18, 1996**



**ASIAN AMERICAN  
RENAISSANCE**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Asian Youth Project was to collect information about the well being of Asian youth in the Twin Cities using graduation and drop-out rates, juvenile justice data, and the results from a phone survey of eleven agencies with programs that target Asian youth. Nearly half of the Asian American population in Minnesota is under the age of 18. Forty-five percent of the Asian Americans in Minnesota live in the Twin Cities and most of the community resides in St. Paul. The rate of growth of the Asian American community has been especially dramatic in the public schools, 1 in every 4 students enrolled in the St. Paul Public Schools is Asian American. In the Minneapolis Public Schools, the percentage of Asian American students doubled in the decade between the 1984 and 1994.

School: Asian American students are doing well in public schools in the Twin Cities. Asian American students have higher overall graduation rates than the district averages and drop-out rates are low compared to other groups. However, between the 1991-91 and 1993-94 school years, the Asian American student drop-out rate for St. Paul Public Schools increased from 9.5 percent to 14.6 percent.

Juvenile Justice: New admissions of Asian American juveniles into the juvenile justice system has remained at approximately 20 percent since 1987 in St. Paul. We found that Asian Americans comprised 7.5 percent of those juveniles who had committed three or more crimes in 1995. Asian American boys are more likely to be chronic offenders and Asian American girls are twice as likely as boys to appear in court on a truancy or status offense.

Community Programs: We surveyed twenty-eight programs across 13 agencies and found that 53.6 percent of the programs offered direct services, or formal structured program activities. Sixty-eight percent of programs targeted children who were 12 and older. Half of all programs surveyed target at-risk or delinquent youth. Most programs targeting Asian American youth were not gender specific.

### Needs and Recommendations:

- Increase involvement of schools to incorporate culturally appropriate and pride building activities for Asian youth on site.
- More research is needed about the incidence of criminal offenses among Asian youth because no real conclusions can be drawn due to inconsistencies in official reports of Asian youth and crime. Comparative research with Whites, Blacks, Latino/Chicano groups is needed to assess the extent of Asian juvenile crime.
- Create more programs and activities for Asian children who are younger and are not yet in trouble.
- Ensure that information about Asian youth is released to the public so that appropriate and constructive program development is possible.
- Establish a research and lobbying position to ensure that the rights of Asian children in the Twin Cities are being met in the public sector.

## Preface

"Asian American Youth in the Twin Cities: Overachievers or Delinquents" is a brief report that only scratches the surface of how Asian American youth are doing in the Twin Cities. However, this is the first attempt to really try to see how Asian American youth are doing in the Twin Cities.

So, why is there so much silence on the part of public policymakers on the subject of Asian children? Why has no effort been made to get more information pooled for public decision making purposes? There are many reports about African American children and Chicano/Latino children and even the Native Americans have the American Indian Policy Institute with John Poupart at the head. However, there seems to be no evidence to indicate how community agencies and government bodies are serving Asian American children.

Some of the excuses for inaction are related to the recent waves of Southeast Asian refugees. Language barriers have often been used by policy makers and researchers to disregard how Asian children are doing. Furthermore, with the focus on welfare reform and a manic frenzy to get adults to achieve what we call "self-sufficiency", there is little room to concentrate on the real losers, children. Cultural differences among different Asian American groups is also used as an excuse for exclusion. Can you pool a first generation Hmong American with a third generation Chinese American? Still, there are other researchers who assume there are not enough Asians in Minnesota to draw a good sample for study. Those who do add Asians into the equation do not know where to start collecting information to draw any conclusive results because little to no information exists.

Some personal experiences also led me to want to write this report. Two summers ago, I worked with the Minnesota Department of Human Services as an intern. The Department of Human Services had just hosted a symposium for children of color earlier that spring to ascertain how children of color were doing in the State of Minnesota. After reading the recommendations set forth in the report, I noticed no recommendations were directed towards the Asian American community. In fact, upon further delving, I found there was no representation from the Asian American community at the conference. When I asked some of the organizers of the symposium what happened, they told me that the Asian American community had been "unresponsive" "too differentiated" and that there were "just too many groups" to deal with so "I guess that's why no one came." Of course, this was not the first time that Asian American children had been neglected in the public arena.

And then, there are my own experiences as an Asian American child growing up in St. Paul. No one was ever really interested in me as a child in elementary school except for the English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, except that I was spoke English too well to be in their classes. Despite the fact that I tested out of ESL almost every year, I remember being placed back into ESL classes almost every year and then being mainstreamed into regular classes again after a few months. Although my memories are a bit shaky, I distinctly remember feeling that there must be something terribly wrong with me because I kept floating in and out of special classes tailored for my very special needs.

In my research for my master's paper, I found that Asian girls are twice as likely to be referred to court for a truancy/status offense. I also found that there seemed to be a discrepancy between actual academic ability and ability tracking in the public schools. Of course, this is mere speculation on my part, but how can so many Asian American students who are native born be in ESL and special education classes? Even if Asian American students are graduating at higher rates than most other groups in St. Paul and Minneapolis Public Schools, are they graduating with a quality education?

While doing my research on truancy and Hmong girls, I talked informally to parents, teachers and social workers who told me the same thing over and over: once a kid is labeled as a truant or a troublemaker, there is almost no way that kid can get out of the stereotype. One social worker expressed his horror when a Hmong father walked into the office of the high school principal with an interpreter to talk about how his child was doing only to be ignored. The principal raised his eyes to the father only long enough to tell him that his child was not a good person and that there was nothing to be done.

Thus, there seems to be a disjuncture between the almost rosy results in "Asian American Youth in the Twin Cities: Overachievers or Delinquents" and in my personal experiences. For example, if it's true that the number of Asian American youth in probation and detention has remained relatively stable since 1987, why do I always read and hear reports about the escalation of crimes in the Asian American community? Why are people still shocked when they find out I am Hmong and that I am a high school graduate? The disjuncture between real life experiences and the results of the report exists because this report is a quantitative study and does not capture the real life dynamics of the Asian American community. Until we establish a solid foundation or institute to research issues within the Asian American community, we will continue to grapple for straws that continually slip through our fingers.

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### APPENDIX A: LIST OF AGENCIES SURVEYED

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nearly 50 percent of the Asians in Minnesota are under the age of 18<sup>1</sup>. In the Frogtown and East Side neighborhoods of St. Paul, the poverty rate for Asian American children under the age of 17 is 70 percent. In the past twenty years, the Asian American population of the Twin Cities has exploded due to an influx of Southeast Asian refugees and subsequent secondary migration<sup>2</sup>. The addition of this Asian American population to earlier Asian immigrant groups such as the Japanese now makes Asians a visible and significant population in the Twin Cities. Projected growth of the Asian American population in the next 20 years is estimated at 200 percent.

In the past 10 years, troubling newspaper articles and news reports have implied that Asian American children are becoming increasingly involved in criminal activities and not doing as well in school. However, we know little about whether these negative images of Asian American youth are true reflections of the numbers of Asian American children who have "gone bad".

- Are Asian American youth really doing poorly?
- What kinds of services and programs currently target Asian American youth?
- Is there anything that local policymakers and community agencies can do to support Asian American children?
- Are Asian American children achieving in school or not?

The purpose of this project was to try to answer some of these questions about the relative well-being of Asian American youth in the Twin Cities.

Asian American Renaissance focused on three research areas: school, juvenile justice, and community agencies with programs that target Asian American youth. These three areas were not meant to be exhaustive. For example, we did not choose to look at domestic violence and neglect even though this is an important aspect of child well-being. Time and project limitations forced us to narrow our focus. We felt that these three areas would provide us with useful initial information to educate ourselves, other community agencies serving youth, local government, and others interested in the welfare of Asian American youth.

This project was partially funded by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota through a Communiiversity Grant.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Secondary migration is a phenomenon among Southeast Asian refugees who tend to move after resettlement in the United States to follow kin.

## **HOW THE INFORMATION WAS COLLECTED**

### *Data Sources*

Asian American Renaissance collected school and juvenile justice information from public organizations, published and unpublished reports, and data banks such as the 1990 Census. Organizations that provided us with information are listed in the footnotes and cited throughout this report. Examples of organizations that released information to us include the Minnesota Department of Families, Children and Learning and the St. Paul Police Department.

Although we tried to gather comparable information from St. Paul and Minneapolis, this was not always possible. Limitations in comparison stem from data that is either unavailable to us because of format or because of confidentiality issues.

### *Phone Survey*

To ascertain the type of programs available for Asian American youth through community agencies, we conducted a brief phone of agencies in our Directory of Asian American Organizations that listed "youth programs" as a component of their services.

Fourteen agencies were surveyed. Only one agency listed it targeted Asian American youth did not target Asian American youth. The 13 agencies provided a total of 28 youth-serving programs (See AppendixA). We asked for the name of the program, the purpose of the program, how many hours a week the program ran, who the program targeted, and what days of the week the program occurred.

## **II. THE CONTEXT: ASIANS IN THE TWIN CITIES**

According to the 1990 Census, 77,886 Asians live in Minnesota. According to the 1990 Census, 34,089 Asians live in the Twin Cities metropolitan area alone. This means that 45 percent of Asians live in or near the Twin Cities. Asians are the second fastest growing community of color in Minnesota<sup>3</sup>. The growth of the Asian American community continues to escalate as a last wave of Southeast Asians arrive. More Asians live in St. Paul than in Minneapolis. Of the 34,089 Asians residing in the Twin Cities, 55 percent of them live in St. Paul. The Asian American population in St. Paul also tends to be younger and less ethnically diverse than Minneapolis.

Tables A and B show the six neighborhoods in St. Paul and Minneapolis with the highest population concentration of Asians and which ethnic group makes up the largest percentage in each neighborhood. The larger the percentage total of the ethnic group, the more homogeneous the neighborhood.

**Table A St. Paul Neighborhoods by Highest Ethnic Asian Concentration**

<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>Total Asian</b>	<b>Largest Group</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>%Total</b>
Thomas-Dale	3865	Hmong	3041	78.6
North End	3421	Hmong	2714	79.3
Summit-University	2186	Hmong	1794	82.0
Payne-Phalen	1885	Hmong	1580	83.0
Hazel Park	1762	Hmong	1300	73.8
West Side	1190	Hmong	815	68.5

*Adaptation from the Community Profiles Report, Moore and Yang, 1995.*

In St. Paul, the Hmong make up the largest share of the Asian American population in each of the six neighborhoods and the neighborhoods are relatively homogenous.

**Table B Minneapolis Neighborhoods by Highest Asian Ethnic Concentration**

<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>Total Asian</b>	<b>Largest Group</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>%Total</b>
Near North	3796	Hmong	2063	54.3
University	3391	Chinese	889	26.2
Powderhorn	2736	Hmong	1010	36.9
Phillips	1420	Hmong	788	55.5
Southwest	1248	Korean	256	20.5
Northeast	764	Vietnamese	239	31.3

*Adaptation from the Community Profiles Report, Moore and Yang, 1995.*

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<sup>3</sup> State Demographer's Office



In Minneapolis, the neighborhoods with high Asian American concentrations show greater ethnic diversity than St. Paul. The greater diversity within the Asian American population in Minneapolis can be attributed to the earlier immigration and settlement patterns of East Asians<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups (1981). Eds. June Drenning Holmquist, Minnesota Historical Society Press.

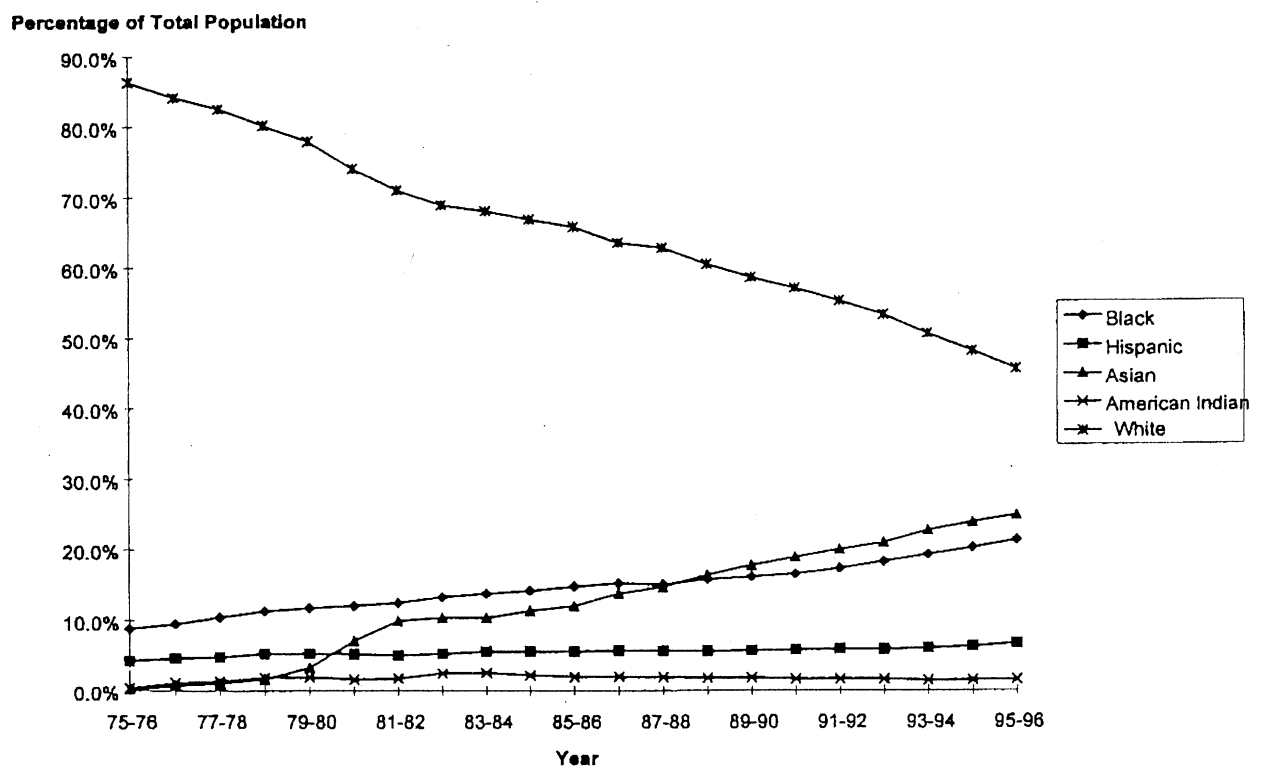
### **III. SCHOOL RESULTS**

#### ***A. School Enrollment Trends of Asian American Children***

The Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning reports that 55 percent of Asian American students enrolled in public schools in Hennepin County lived in Minneapolis in the fall of 1995. In Ramsey County, 86 percent of Asian American children enrolled in public schools lived in St. Paul.

In 1976, only 96 Asian American students were enrolled in the entire St. Paul Public School District. Twenty years later in 1996, there are over 10,000 Asian American students. Figure 1 shows the changing enrollment patterns as a percentage of the total St. Paul Public School District population in the past 20 years.

**Figure 1 RACIAL COMPOSITION OF ST. PAUL SCHOOLS, 1976-1996**

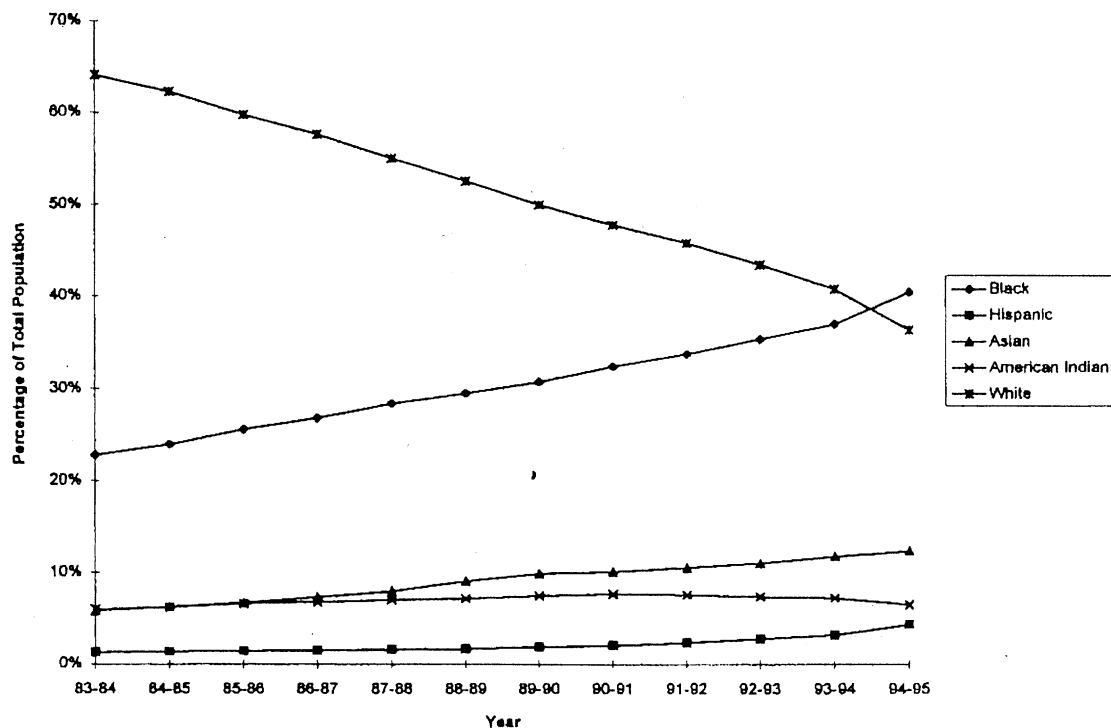


- The White student population has been gradually declining over the past 20 years as the Asian American population has been increasing.
- In the St. Paul Public School District in 1995-96, one out of every four students enrolled in the public schools was Asian.

- Asian American children comprise the largest minority group in the St. Paul Public Schools, surpassing the next largest group, Blacks, by 4 percentage points.

There has not been as dramatic an increase in Asian American enrollment in the Minneapolis Public Schools as for the St. Paul Public Schools. The biggest increase in population size over time has been among the Black student population, not the Asian American student population. Figure 2 shows the changing enrollment patterns as a percentage of the total Minneapolis Public School District population over the past decade.

**Figure 2 Racial Composition of Minneapolis Public Schools, 1983-1995**



- In Minneapolis, Black students make up 40 percent of Minneapolis School District population while Asian American students make up only 12 percent of the total district population.
- The percentage of Asian American students has doubled in the decade between 1984 and 1994 in Minneapolis.
- Black students are the largest group enrolled in Minneapolis public schools, surpassing White students by 4 percentage points.

### *Secondary School Support of Asian American Students*

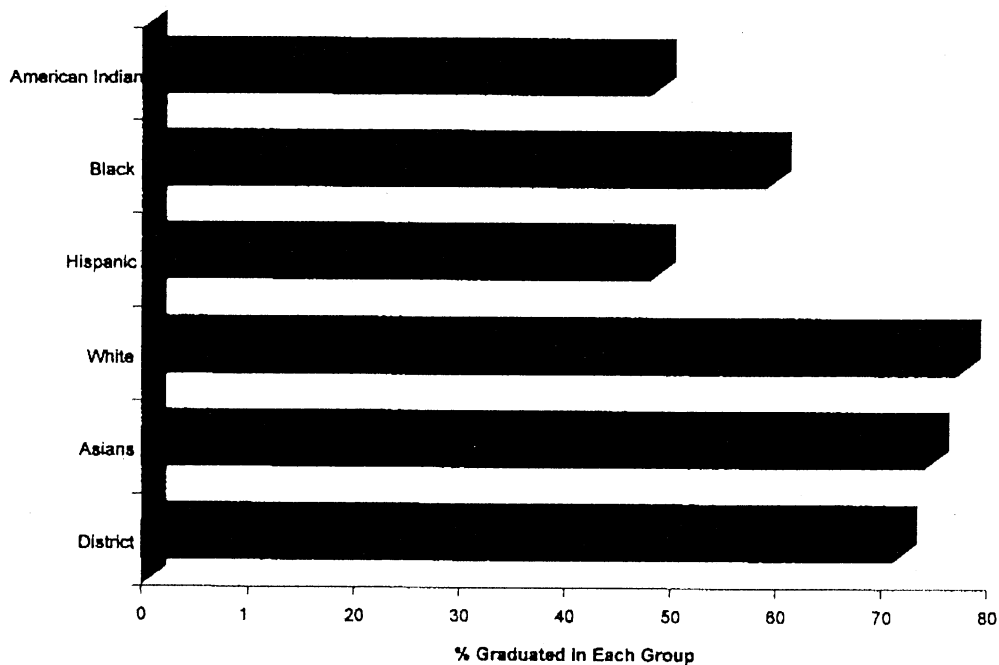
In St. Paul, Asian American students make up a significant and increasingly large proportion of the student population. To find out how schools were supporting Asian American students, Asian American Renaissance did a preliminary phone survey sweep of the St. Paul and Minneapolis Public Schools to ask whether secondary schools had programs that target Asian American youth. We found that Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Schools tried to support Asian American youth through the supervision of Asian clubs, activities during Asian American Heritage Month, and brief partnerships with local mutual assistance agencies. However, few of the activities were on-going or permanent. Activities that target Asian American students tend to be temporary one time events.

### ***B. Graduation Rates***

Asian American children are graduating at higher rates than the district average in St. Paul and Minneapolis<sup>5</sup>. Minneapolis has only recently started calculating graduation rates, although the district has always kept graduation numbers. *Numbers* and *rates* are different since the *number* of Asian American students graduating tell us nothing about whether Asian American students who started 9th grade actually finished 12th grade.

1994-95 was the only comparison year possible for Minneapolis and St. Paul schools<sup>6</sup>. Figures 3 and 4 show how Asian American students compare with other groups and district averages during 1994-95.

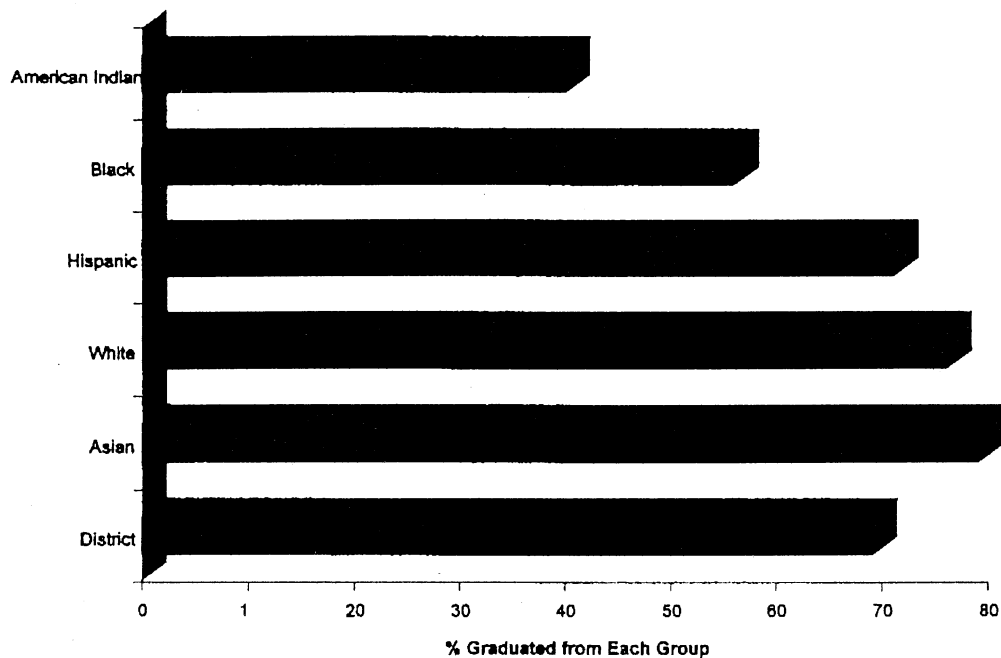
**Figure 3 St. Paul Graduation Rates, 1994-95**



<sup>5</sup> Graduation rates are calculated as the inverse of the drop-out rate tracing a cohort (students in a particular grade) forward through high school. Certain variables are held constant that may not be true in the long run. For example, the rate of growth in the student body is held constant for 4 years in a cohort projection. In the mid-1980's when there was a large influx of Asian students, the rate of growth shot up and graduation projections were rendered basically useless for these cohorts.

<sup>6</sup> Minneapolis Public Schools has only completed calculation of graduation rates for 1994-95.

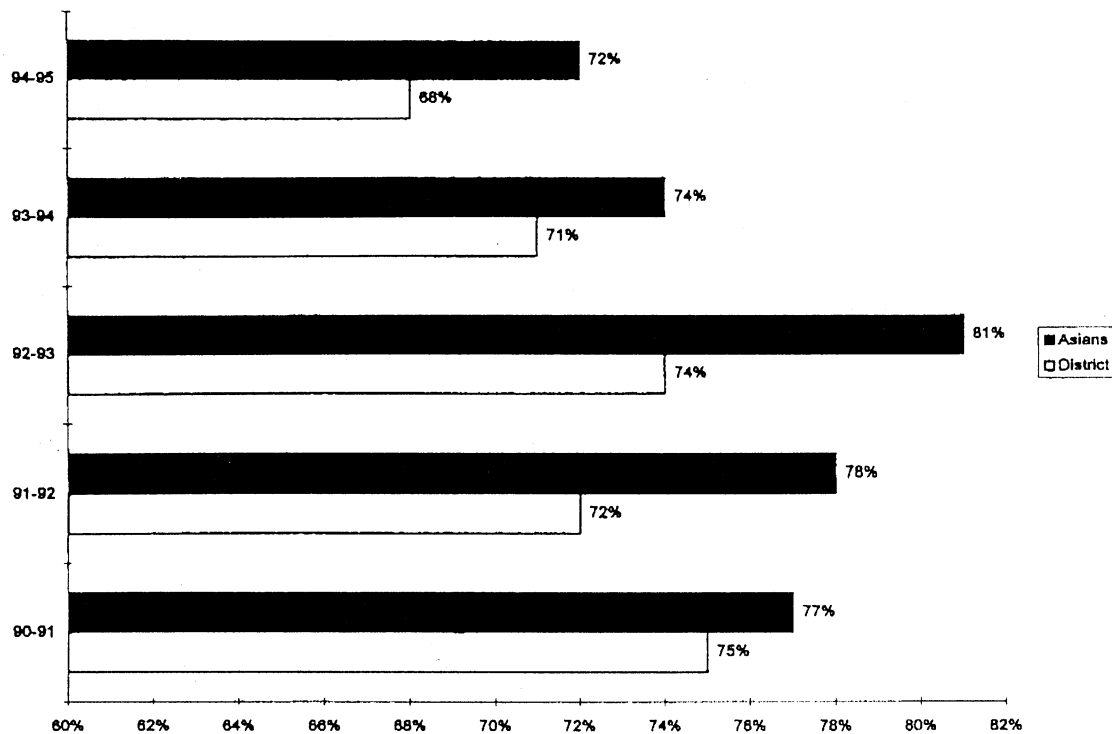
**Figure 4 Minneapolis Graduation Rates, 1994-95**



- In both cities, graduation rates indicate that Asian American students are graduating at a higher rate than any other groups of color.
- American Indian students have the lowest graduation rates in both cities, hovering around 40 percent . This might be because of low numbers of enrollment in public schools in general or due to the mobility of American Indian students to and from reservations.
- In 1994-95, Asian American students graduated at a higher rate than White students in Minneapolis.

Because this comparison is only for one year, we examined the graduation rate trends over the past five years in St. Paul to see if 1994-95 was a typical year. Figure 5 shows the Asian American graduation rates compared to the district rate from 1990-1995.

**Figure 5 Asian American Graduation Rates in St. Paul, 1990-1995**



- In St. Paul Public Schools, Asian American students have consistently graduated from high school at higher rates than the district average since 1990.

### ***C. Drop-Out Rates***

The annual drop-out rate is defined as the percentage of students in grades 9-12 who drop out in a single year. This measure is useful because it reveals how many students are leaving high school each year and how each year's rates compare with previous years. This rate, however, does not show the cumulative effect of students dropping out over a period of several years. Table C compares the annual drop-out rates of Asian American students to city district averages from 1991-94. Drop-out rates for years after 1994 are not yet available.

**Table C Annual Drop-Out Rates of Asian American Students in Minneapolis and St. Paul**

School Year	Mpls Asian	Mpls District	St. Paul Asian	St. Paul District
91-92	7.8%	17.8%	9.5%	14.5%
92-93	16.9%	25.1%	13.2%	18.7%
93-94	9.1%	15.4%	14.6%	16.4%

*Minnesota Department of Families, Children, and Learning, 1996.*

- Annual drop-out rates for Asian American students in Minneapolis and St. Paul have been lower than the school district averages for 1991-1994<sup>7</sup>; however, it seems that in St. Paul there has been a steady increase in the numbers of Asian American children dropping out since the 1991-92 school year.

*Summary and Implications:*

Academic achievement in terms of low drop-out rates and high graduation rates does not necessarily mean that social support is available for Asian American students. One disturbing statistic is that between the school years 1991-91 and 1993-94, the drop-out rate for Asian American students in St. Paul Public schools increased by five percentage points from 9.5 percent to 14.6 percent. According to our brief query of public secondary schools in St. Paul and Minneapolis, there seems to be a lack of activities that target and support Asian American students year round in public schools. Although most respondents at schools we spoke with on the phone told us that they have activities that target Asian American youth, activities were usually either temporary measures or "in the process" of being established.

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<sup>7</sup> Drop-out rates are calculated differently in each school district. These numbers are from the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning. The department collects the information from each district and applies a standard formula for comparison.



#### **IV. JUVENILE JUSTICE RESULTS**

Asian American Renaissance focused on St. Paul for juvenile justice statistics because St. Paul has a younger Asian American community. Statistics from Minneapolis were more difficult to secure due to a smaller Asian American youth population and time limitations for data analysis.

In St. Paul we found:

- Rates of probation and detention for Asian American juveniles is low compared to other groups<sup>8</sup>.
- New cases of admissions for Asian American into the juvenile justice system has remained relatively stable at around 20 percent since 1987 in St. Paul<sup>9</sup>. Active Asian American cases in the juvenile justice system are usually boys, most of them Hmong. It is especially important to note that this reflects the growth of the Hmong population in St. Paul rather than a real increase in criminal activity in the Hmong population.
- As a measure of chronicity, we counted Asian American juveniles who had been charged with three or more crimes in 1995 and found that Asians comprised 7.5 percent of those juveniles who had been charged with 3 or more crimes in St. Paul. Of these, 91 percent were boys<sup>10</sup>.

Of course, the statistics presented here also hinge on the size of each population in St. Paul. If school-age children are used as a measure of the number of youth of color residing in St. Paul, Blacks are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system and Asians are underrepresented. Asians comprise nearly 24 percent of the school age population, but only 7.5 percent of the chronic offenders in St. Paul in 1995.

- While Asian American boys are more likely to be chronic offenders who are charged with crimes, Asian American girls in St. Paul are twice as likely as boys to appear in court on a truancy/status offense<sup>11</sup>. Thus, the pattern of crimes for boys and girls seems to be different. A boy is more likely to be charged on "hard core" crime and girls are more likely to be charged on crimes that are related to their status as a minor, i.e. drinking, curfew violation, skipping school.

#### *Summary and Implications:*

The juvenile justice facts above are based on official statistics. Although official statistics may reflect true criminal activity, they might also reflect police and juvenile justice

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<sup>8</sup> A juvenile is defined as anyone who is under the age of 18.

<sup>9</sup> Juvenile Services, St. Paul.

<sup>10</sup> St. Paul Police, Juvenile Evaluation Unit 1995.

<sup>11</sup> Yang (1996). Growing Up Hmong-American: Truancy Policy and Girls. Unpublished Master's Thesis.

practices. Black youth, for example, are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system and it is well known that discrimination exists. Perhaps because Asian American youth are typically stereotyped as the "model minority," juvenile justice workers may be less likely to charge an Asian American child with a crime than to charge a Black child with a crime.

Initiatives to decrease crime and prevent gang involvement among Asian American youth are necessary but are perhaps not as dire as originally indicated through popular consensus. Also, because girls and boys have different patterns of offense, gender specific crime intervention and prevention programs might be the most effective.

Asian American youth are neither entering the juvenile justice system at an increasing rate nor are they disproportionately represented in probation and detention centers. Chronic offenders are more likely to be Asian American boys than girls, but Asians as a percentage of the total number of juveniles charged with crimes is low. While we have Asian American youth who are in the juvenile justice system, Asian American youth do not commit any more crimes than other populations.

However, among Southeast Asian American leaders and community workers, there has been widespread concern about Asian American youth and delinquency because of popular media reports and a general lack of information about the quantity of crime. There might be several other reasons why crime among Asians may be a widespread concern. First, there exists the stereotype that Asians are the "model minority." Asians are supposed to be "crime-free" unlike other groups of color. Second, the new Southeast Asian populations are highly visible due to cultural adjustment issues so there might be more cause for alarm among community workers and leaders. Third, official statistics only reflect reported crimes. Because of language and cultural barriers, it is likely that a majority of crimes are never reported to the police, especially if the crimes are committed against other Asian American persons.

## V. COMMUNITY PROGRAM SURVEY RESULTS

Asian American Renaissance selected agencies from the Directory of Asian American Community Organizations in the Twin Cities that listed they were youth-serving agencies. While there are mainstream agencies that may also target Asian American youth through specific programs, we chose to narrow our focus to ascertain how we were doing in terms of supporting our own community. Also, it was difficult to locate which mainstream agencies had programs that specifically target Asian American children.

We surveyed 13 agencies or 28 programs. Programs were categorized as direct, indirect, or both. Direct services programs included programs with structured activities for youth at least three days a week. Indirect services programs included activities such as counseling, placement and referrals, and information/support sessions.

- Out of the 28 programs surveyed, 53.6 percent , offered direct services. 28.6 percent offered indirect services for Asian American youth. The rest of the programs had a combination of both direct and indirect services.

Direct services serve fewer youth because they are more time intensive. However, direct services programs are valuable because youth receive more attention and guidance than in indirect or referral based programs which may serve more youth but be less affective in the long run.

- Most program activities targeting Asian American youth were not gender specific; however, for certain programs such as the *Peem Tsheej I* (Struggling for Success) program at Hmong American Partnership, same-sex caseworkers worked with at-risk girls. If gender-specific programs existed, they targeted crime for boys and pregnancy for girls.
- 68 percent of the programs targeted children 12 and older.
- 50 percent of the programs surveyed targeted at-risk or delinquent youth
- 78 percent or 22 out of the 28 programs were offered directly after school.
- 46.2 percent of the programs had weekend activities, usually field trips during the school year.

### *Summary and Implications:*

For many of the programs, a child becomes “eligible” to participate in program activities if the child is over 12 and if the child is at-risk or already delinquent. Few program activities exist for younger children and for children who are not in trouble. Instead of focusing on prevention, most programs focus on intervention.

A more proactive prevention strategy is necessary to build a safe and nurturant environment for Asian American youth to grow. Instead of focusing on the intervention, community agencies should shift some focus onto activities for children who are not in trouble. One way to be more proactive would be to create programs and activities that younger children. This is important because building a place for children to grow will enable them to make better decisions when they encounter difficulties during adolescent years.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the information provided in this study.

*Recommendation 1:* Increase involvement of schools to incorporate culturally appropriate and pride building activities on site. The growth of the Asian American student population necessitates that on-going or permanent support systems be created to ensure that Asian students are getting the support needed in order to achieve academically and socially.

*Recommendation 2:* More in-depth research of criminal offenses among Asian American youth is required because no real conclusions can be drawn about the extent of crime due to inconsistencies in official reports. Comparative research with Whites, Blacks, Latino/Chicano groups is needed for a more accurate count.

*Recommendation 3:* Create more programs and activities for Asian American children who are elementary school age and who are not in trouble. There are few programs that are available for younger children and children who are not in trouble. Little attention is given to the bulk of Asian American children. Shifting from intervention to prevention based strategies might be more productive in the long run.

*Recommendation 4:* Ensure that information about Asian American youth is released to the public so that appropriate and constructive program development is possible. One justification that has been used for exclusion of Asian children from the public policy arena has been a lack of information. This study is only one example of how information can be pooled together for public policy and program development purposes.

*Recommendation 5:* Establish a lobbying position to ensure that the rights and needs of Asian American children in the Twin Cities are being met in the public sector. Advocacy on behalf of Asian American children is needed at all different levels, local, state, and federal. Creating a lobbying position or central point person for disseminating information regarding Asian American children would be highly beneficial for everyone, especially as the Asian American population continues to grow in Minnesota.

It is time for local policymakers and community agencies recognize that although there seems to be a dearth of information on Asian American youth due to historic academic and mainstream neglect, it is available. Lack of information regarding the Asian American population, especially Asian American children and youth, should not be used as an excuse for inaction.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **AGENCIES SURVEYED**

- 1. The Association for the Advancement of Hmong Women in Minnesota**
- 2. Asian Media Access**
- 3. Center for Asian and Pacific Islanders**
- 4. Hmong American Partnership**
- 5. Hmong Mutual Assistance Agency**
- 6. Hmong Minnesota Pacific Association**
- 7. Hmong Youth Association**
- 8. Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota**
- 9. Lao Family Community of Minnesota**
- 10. Lao Parent-Teachers Association**
- 11. Southeast Asian Community Council**
- 12. United Cambodian Association of Minnesota**
- 13. Vietnamese Social Services**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**May Kao Yang** holds an M.A. in public affairs from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota and a B.A. in psychology from Brown University. Her study focus at the Humphrey Institute was social policy and distributive justice. May Kao is a Hmong refugee who immigrated to the United States in 1976 and grew up in St. Paul. In the summer of 1996, she traveled to northeastern Thailand on a mission to help the last of the Hmong and Lao refugees come safely to the United States. She would like to thank all those who have helped her with this project.